

Washington, DC— Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), a member of House Armed Services Committee, co-sponsored and voted for passage of the Iran Counterproliferation Act (H.R. 1400). The legislation represents the toughest in a series of measures the House has passed in recent months targeting Iran's nuclear program and sponsorship of terrorist (or suspected terrorist) groups. — "I co-sponsored the Iran Counterproliferation Act because I believe we must hold Tehran accountable for its pursuit of nuclear weapons, and do this by using every available peaceful means — economic, political and diplomatic — to put a stop to this deadly, dangerous pursuit," said Congressman Sestak.

The Iran Counterproliferation Act will strengthen the enforcement and implementation of existing U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Economic Sanctions on Iran

The bill bars all Iranian imports to the United States, expands sanctions on Iranian exports and removes President Bush's ability to waive sanctions on corporations doing business with Iran's energy industry.

Additionally, the bill expands the definition of persons who would be subject to sanctions for making investments that increase Iran's ability to develop its petroleum resources. The new definition adds financial institutions, insurers, underwriters, guarantors, and any other business organizations, including any foreign subsidiaries, to the list of entities already barred from investing in Iran.

The legislation will make parent companies that create entities to invest in Iran subject to the same penalties that would apply if the parent company had actually engaged in such activity. It also authorizes the President to sanction chief executives and other high-ranking officers of offending entities, as well as the entities themselves.

The bill also adds several petroleum by-products, liquefied natural gas, and natural gas resources to the definition of "petroleum resources" for which assistance is prohibited, and requires that the U.S. subsidiary of any company which is subject to sanctions under the Iran Sanctions Act would no longer be eligible for tax benefits relating to oil exploration in the United States.

Nuclear Cooperation with Iranian Benefactors

The bill prevents the President from signing a nuclear cooperation agreement with any nation that aids Iran's nuclear or missile programs. More specifically, the provision indicates that no agreement can take place until the President certifies to Congress that Iran has ceased its pursuit of a nuclear explosive device, and that the relevant government has suspended all such assistance to Iran and is committed to maintaining the suspension until Iran has implemented measures to cease its pursuit of a nuclear explosive device.

Presidential Reports and Actions

The bill requires the President to submit a report every six months to appropriate congressional committees on foreign investment and pre-investment activity that could contribute to the enhancement of Iran's ability to develop its petroleum resources.

Finally, the Iranian Counterproliferation Act calls on President Bush to declare the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist group and grants the president the authority to block the assets of any entity supporting the Revolutionary Guards.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.